

# KEEPING YOU POSTED

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## Gast named executive director of Coordinating Center for Women

Mary Sue Gast has been named executive director of the UCC Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society.

Gast, associate conference minister of the UCC Indiana-Kentucky Conference since 1986, becomes head of CCW July 1.



Gast

Marilyn M. Breitling, CCW director since 1980, retires in June and takes up duties as Director of Continuing Education for Eden Seminary on August 1.

As executive director, Gast will be responsible for monitoring the status of women in the denomination and develop-

ing policies and programs to address women's concerns and eliminate sexism inside and outside the church. She will also convene a team representing all UCC national bodies to coordinate programs related to women, represent the United Church of Christ in various ecumenical settings and oversee Women in Mission, a partnership network for women in the UCC.

"The Coordinating Center exists to address the concerns of all women -- lay, clergy, feminist, traditional -- from all ethnic and economic groupings," she says. These concerns include empowerment, leadership, spiritual development, social justice and liberation for women in church and society.

## KYP warns pastors -

### Check social security earnings record

Many pastors' social security benefits earned between 1986 and the present have not been recorded by the Social Security Administration.

Information from the Social Security Administration's central office cites an Internal Revenue Service "processing error" as the reason for the problem. As a result, ministers could lose social security benefits earned since 1986.

To verify the accuracy of your earnings record so that you will receive your full benefits, take these steps:

- Send a "70004" form to your area Social Security office to obtain your earnings statement for the years 1986 to present (obtain the form from your local Social Security office).
- If your earnings haven't been recorded, mail a "70008" form and copies of your 1040s (including self-employment schedules), W-2s, and cancelled checks showing your income tax payments to the Office of Central Records Operations, 300 N.

Greene Street, Baltimore, Md. 21201 (obtain the 70008 form from your area Social Security office).

These procedures should ensure that your benefits are recorded accurately, say Social Security Administration staff, who add that "in most circumstances" there is no deadline for challenging Social Security records. Ask your local Social Security office if there's a time limit in your specific case.

The Social Security Administration expects the IRS to correct the error by 1992.

## Booklet offers guide to pastoral relations committees

The Office for Church Life and Leadership has published a new resource booklet, *The Pastoral Relations Committee*.

The booklet was prepared and published by OCCL through support from Strengthen the Church Offering in response to requests from local churches. It defines and offers guidelines for pastoral relations committees.

Topics covered include, among others,

## Executive Council calls for peace, AIDS policies and the end of a boycott

The Executive Council, at the March meeting, took action on three major social justice issues.

In a resolution on renewing international peace efforts in the Middle East, the council called on the allied coalition to work through the United Nations "for economic justice in the region" to "assist in building more just and peaceful relations" among Middle Eastern peoples and nations.

The council also strengthened the personnel policies on AIDS which govern the UCC's executive offices. New wording refers to "human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV), the third stage of which is acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)." The new policy prohibits AIDS testing as a pre-employment condition. It prohibits discrimination and harassment of employees and applicants on the basis of HIV/AIDS diagnosis or disability.

The American Home Products boycott was ended because of improvements in the company's practices. The boycott began in 1989 to protest the company's milk substitutes distribution to hospitals in poor countries. General Synod 17 said that the distribution of free samples and supplies caused poor mothers to use formula instead of breast feeding, even when they couldn't afford it and lacked sanitary bottles and clean water for mixing it. The Hunger Action Office will continue to monitor American Home's practices.

the functions and responsibilities of pastoral relations committees, how pastoral relations committees are related to search committees and working in a multiple staff setting.

Copies are \$5.00 each, and can be ordered from United Church Resources, 800 N. Third Street, Suite 202, St. Louis, Mo., 63102.

The catalog number is E25.

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

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Resolutions going to Synod are diverse and plentiful, page 3

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# What has Desert Storm taught us?/ ¿Que nos ha enseñado 'Tempestad en el de desierto'?

*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.*  
- Ps. 85:10, NRSV

The recent Persian Gulf war, brandished by the USA and its Western allies with the blessing and legitimization of the United Nations, has left us full of perplexity for its wide destructive capacity. At the same time, it has opened our eyes to new realities. We have witnessed the real destructive power of a technologically sophisticated surgical war and the dangers of bacteriological, chemical and nuclear wars. We are witnessing the birth of a new international order, which in reality is but the resurrection of the old imperial order in the context of the weakening of power politics as a consequence of Soviet "perestroika."

As a result of the war, the ideologies of a just war brandished by President George Bush, and of a holy war held by President Saddam Hussein, have been shipwrecked totally. After so much destruction, suffering, starvation and the exile of thousands of refugees, it will be very difficult to justify war and conflict based on religious world-visions. Both the United States and Iraq's nationalist civil religion went overboard. Disregard and poor sensibility toward the ecosystem, exemplified by the spread of crude oil in the seas, the purposeful burnings of refineries and the cost of exploding tons of bombs and missiles has put the sanctification and justification of any war at bay.

The demonic aspect of modern cybernetics and press censure, in regard to information on the bombings, destruction, hunger and death of hundreds of innocent people, is exposed when truth is substituted for propaganda and news control. Is there a truthful way of justifying the defense of anti-democratic regimes and absolute monarchies under the guise of defending freedom and democracy? From an ethical and theological point of view, the paradigm of God as almighty, with its semantic meanings of king, ruler, lord, master and governor has become bankrupt. This deity's attributes of hierarchy, imperialism, duality, absolutism, transcendence and omnipotence collapse, and oblige us to look for new models in order to speak about God and divine purposes in history.

I agree with feminist theologian, Sallie McFague, that androcentric paradigms are not appropriate with the new post-modern sensibilities. Now, it will be necessary to construct new models through which to express both God's and our relationship to the world -- relations that are open, caring, inclusive, interdependent, changing, mutual and creative. The feminist theologian proposes a conceptual model of God as a mother, lover and friend, which will help us conceive of ourselves as gardeners, care-takers, mothers and fathers, stewards, trustees, lovers, priests, co-creators and friends of the world.

If we adopt this new viewpoint, we will be preparing the way so that love and faithfulness will meet, and righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Then we will be peacemakers.

*This issue's Theology Forum author is the Rev. Jorge L. Bardeguéz, Ph.D., pastor, Iglesia Evangelica Unida, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico*

## Priorities Report

**Integrity of Creation, Justice & Peace...**Participants at the Washington North Idaho Conference's spring youth retreat learned a lot about the integrity of creation, justice and peace. Retreat leader Jeff Spencer used verses about ecology and hunger from the song, "From a Distance," and role playing exercises to help the youth understand the Christian response to social issues. **Evangelism & Membership Growth...**The North Dakota Conference is training laypersons to serve as licensed ministers in areas where an ordained minister is absent. Participants are commissioned after intensive training. The program has helped the rural Huron, S.D., area, says Francis Blumenfeld, pastor of Congregational UCC in Huron. She recommends it to other conferences. **Education...**John A. Ekman, pastor of The New England Congregational Church, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., uses international travel to keep his youth program vital. He believes the travel broadens the youth group's horizons. The youth have already visited Germany, Russia, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Italy and Puerto Rico. Last summer they visited the Berlin Wall, the Jewish museums of Prague, and ancient castles and churches, among other sites. On the road, the youth sleep in churches, hotels and homes of local youth. Part of the money for the trips is raised through regular dances at the church.

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*"La misericordia y la verdad se encontraron; la justicia y la paz se besaron."*  
- Salmo 85:10

La reciente guerra en el Golfo Pérsico, efectuada por los EUA y sus aliados occidentales con la anuencia y legitimación de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, a la vez que nos ha dejado perplejos por su amplia capacidad destructiva, nos ha permitido abrir los ojos a nuevas realidades. Hemos podido presenciar la realidad del poder destructivo de una guerra quirúrgica de alta sofisticación tecnológica, a los peligros de una guerra nuclear, química y bacteriológica. Presenciamos el surgimiento de un presunto nuevo orden internacional, que en realidad no es otra cosa que la resurrección de viejo orden imperial en el contexto de la debilitación de la política de bloques como consecuencia directa de la "perestroika" soviética.

El resultado final de la reciente guerra, se fue a pique la ideología de las espiritualidades que utilizan lo religioso para justificar, y retificar la guerra justa esgrimida por el Presidente George Bush, lo mismo que la ideología de la guerra santa, esgrimida por el Presidente Saddam Hussein. Después de tanta destrucción, sufrimiento, hambre y exilio de miles de refugiados, se hará difícil justificar cualquier conflicto bélico sobre la base de la cosmovisión religiosa. Tanto la religión civil nacionalista de los EUA, como de Irak, se han ido por la borda. La falta de respecto y la poca sensibilidad por el ecosistema, ejemplificados por los grandes derramamientos de petróleo en los mares, los incendios mal intencionados de refineries, y el millonario tonelaje de bombas y sofisticados misiles, ponen en jaque, por otro lado la justificación y santificación de cualquier guerra.

Los aspectos "demoníacos" de la moderna cibernética y la extendida y censurada informática, junto al hambre, la opresión de masas inocentes han puesto de manifiesto la muerte de la verdad, cuando se sustituye por la propaganda y la censura. ¿Como justificar la defensa de regimenes antidemocráticos, y monarquías absolutas, bajo el disfraz de defensa de la democracia? Desde el punto de vista ético y teológico, los paradigmas de Dios como todo-poderoso, con sus adscripciones semánticas de Señor, Jerarca, gobernante, amo, dueño, jefe, patrón, capitán, etc., también se han ido en bancarrota. Los atributos de esa deidad, de tipo jerárquico, imperialista, dualista, absolutista, transcendente y omnipotente, se vienen abajo, y nos obligan a buscar nuevos paradigmas y modelos para hablar sobre Dios y sus propósitos en la historia.

Concurrimos con la teóloga feminista Sallie McFague en que los paradigmas androcéntricos ya no son apropiados a la nueva sensibilidad postmodernista. Ahora será necesario construir nuevos modelos mediante los cuales expresemos nuestro entendimiento de la relación de Dios con el mundo, y de nosotros mismos con el mundo que sean abiertos, tiernos, inclusivos, interdependientes, cambiantes, mutuos y creativos. Propone la teóloga feminista un modelo conceptual de Dios como madre, amante y amigo/a, lo que nos ayudará a concebirnos como hortelanos, celadores, madres y padres, administradores, depositarios, amantes, sacerdotes, co-creadores y amigos del mundo. Si adoptamos esta nueva perspectiva, estaremos preparando el camino para que la misericordia y la verdad se encuentren, y para que la justicia y la paz se besen. Y entonces seremos constructores de paz.

## Upcoming Events

**Healing of the Soul - A retreat for parish clergy, May 20-24, at Kirkridge, Bangor, Pa., 18013; (215)588-1793.** **1991 Mercersburg Society Convocation - June 3-4, Old First Reformed UCC, Philadelphia.** Contact Jeffrey L. Roth, 1811 Lincoln Way E., Chambersburg, Pa., 17201; (717)263-8593. **Shall the Gates of Hell Prevail? The Black Church's Response to Crises in the Black Family - June 6-8, Andover Newton, Newton Centre, Mass. Call Charlotte Pridgen Randolph, (617)964-1100, ext. 241.** **Craigville VIII Theological Colloquy, "The Holy Spirit in Creation, Truth and Power, July 22-26, Craigville Conference Center, Craigville, Mass., 92636; (508)775-1265.** **11th Annual Conference of the Interim Ministry Network - June 18-21, San Francisco.** Write IMN, P.O. Box 21251, Baltimore, Md. 21218.

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# General Synod 18 delegates look toward the 21st century

Euthanasia, abortion, sexual harassment, justice for Native Americans, "personal stewardship," nationalized health care, improved public education...Those are among the topics of proposed pronouncements General Synod 18 will consider in Norfolk, Va., June 29-July 2.

Departing from past procedures, delegates will spend only half their meeting on resolutions, pronouncements and other business. The first half of the Synod will be devoted to the UCC planning process, "Toward the 21st Century."

Delegates will break into nine "seminars" Friday afternoon and evening to analyze drafts of the nine "directional statements" that have circulated throughout the church and been revised once since last fall. They will discuss the drafts

further in Saturday plenary sessions. The Synod will not vote on the drafts, but comments on them will go to a coordinating team that will continue the process.

Among many issues before the Synod Sunday through Tuesday will be:

- Two conflicting proposals--a resolution favoring updated laws to safeguard people's right to die and a pronouncement opposing euthanasia and abortion. Past Synods, dealing with euthanasia and abortion separately, have favored people's right to choose in both.

- A proposed pronouncement on sexual harassment and abuse in the church, urging churchwide prevention efforts and policies on what to do when such situations occur.

- Many proposals on justice for Native

Americans, including calls for alternative Columbus Day celebrations and a protest against portraying them as warlike in sports, commerce and the media.

- A proposed pronouncement on "personal stewardship and economic sharing," offering a theology of stewardship and urging measures such as systematic efforts toward family tithing and toward congregational giving of at least 25 percent to Our Church's Wider Mission.

- A proposed pronouncement calling for a U.S. "universal health care" system offering equal access to everyone.

- A proposed pronouncement protesting public school "re-segregation" due to a widening gap between rich and poor. It calls for support for public education, including local church/school cooperation.

## Antoinette Brown Awards Moore and Morrison to be honored at Synod

Marilyn Adams Moore and Eleanor Shelton Morrison were chosen over 35 nominees to win Antoinette Brown Awards. The award is given to two outstanding UCC clergywomen at each Synod, and is named for the first ordained woman minister in the United States.



Moore

Moore was nominated prior to her death, Jan. 2. She will be recognized for her work with the Commission for Racial Justice and the UC Board for Homeland Ministries.



Morrison

Morrison is minister of Pastoral Care at Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Lansing, Mich., and co-director of Leaven, Inc., a consulting partnership which offers resources in spiritual development and feminism.

## WCC catches the Spirit down under!



WCC Photo: Peter Williams

A presentation on the issues faced by indigenous persons throughout the world was made by the Aboriginal people during the Seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held Feb. 7-20 in Canberra, Australia. Based on the theme, "Come Holy Spirit - Renew the Whole Creation," the assembly drew 3,500 people. UCC president Paul Sherry led a group of 40 UCC participants. Former president Avery Post was on the Assembly's planning committee.

## Opposing View

Sharing his views on what makes a Just Peace Church, Jim McKinney, pastor of Pilgrim UCC in Leavenworth, Kan., writes: "...it is relatively easy to beat a drum for peace when our nation is involved in a war which has so much potential for destruction and casualties. It is not so easy, nor nearly so popular, to beat a drum for a national vision which includes environmental issues, a leadership role in world affairs and an energy program which combines conservation with nuclear, fossil fuel and

solar source development." He would "...like to see us bring our interests, talents and creativity together to address these issues." Robert Barksdale, of Warner Robins, Ga., writes regarding statements by "instrumentality heads indicating they are speaking for the United Church of Christ." He says he applauds the efforts of those who brought "...many nations into an allied force that completely devastated Saddam's army. I am glad the administration worked through the United Nations and...hope the national leaders will now promote an arms conference that will make it impossible for another Saddam to arise. I am not for war, but I do believe there comes a time when a bully must be stopped...challenging Saddam before he gained more territory was the right thing to do..."

## Obituaries

The Rev. Rhoda Jane Dickinson, the first recipient of the Antoinette Brown Award, died February 17 at the age of 103. One of the first female ministers ordained in the Congregational Church, Dickinson received the award in 1975. She led churches in Montana, South Dakota and rural Minnesota before moving to Minneapolis and becoming an active member of Plymouth Congregational Church.

Howard Spragg, executive vice presi-

dent of the UC Board for Homeland Ministries from 1969-1983, died Feb. 26 at his home in Deering, N.H., at the age of 73. His innovative approach to home missions helped shape the board's work. Spragg was deeply committed to working with the poor and powerless, and was a major force in helping minorities and unorganized workers. Accused once of being "pro-union," he responded that the dignity of all human beings is part of God's creation.

SEND NEWS stories, PHOTOGRAPHS and OPPOSING VIEWS of 100 words or less to Keeping You Posted, United Church of Christ, Office of Communication, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115.



## News Briefs

### Disciples president nominated

Ecumenism and youth seem to be the winning combination in determining the nominee to head the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Nominated for general minister and president is **Michael K. Kinnamon**, 41, dean of Lexington (KY) Theological Seminary. The Disciples will vote this October at their General Assembly in Tulsa.

### Camp insurance rates hold

UC Board for Homeland Ministries says that campers' insurance rates have not increased for 1991. Fifteen cents per camper per day buys \$3,000 accident and \$600 sickness reimbursement. For 18 cents a day, benefits increase to \$5,000 and \$750, respectively. For details, write French & Ketchum, 330 Fifth Ave., Box 410, Pelham, NY 10803; (914) 738-4011.

### Montana Logging & Ballet Company inspires Tutu scholarship

Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Mont., will give a four-year undergraduate scholarship to a black South African in 1991. The scholarship honors **Bishop Desmond Tutu**, who visited the school in 1990. Three alumni, who are members of a music and comedy group, the Montana Logging and Ballet Company, came up with the idea after they did a fund raiser for the South African cleric.

### Seminaries aim to ease burden

Eden Theological Seminary now offers 20 full-tuition scholarships to full-time students enrolled in the M. Div. program who agree to come under the care of a UCC association by the middler year. Lancaster Theological Seminary offers the scholarship to any student under care of a UCC association who takes at least nine hours a semester.

## Personnel Changes

After nine years as president of the UC Board for Homeland Ministries, **Shelby Rooks** will retire Jan. 31, 1991. **Marilyn M. Breitling**, Executive Director of the Coordinating Center for Women, retires June 30. She becomes the new Director of Continuing Education at Eden Theological Seminary on August 1. On March 19, **Elizabeth C. Nordbeck** was inaugurated dean of the faculty and vice president of academic affairs at Andover Newton. **There are new faces at the Homeland Board.** In the *Division of the American*

*Missionary Association*, **Loretta Richardson** is the new Secretary for Health and Welfare, **Michael A. Downs** is Secretary for Church Building and **Susan A. Sanders** is the new Secretary for Volunteer Service Programs. In the *Division of Evangelism and Local Church Development*, **Paul H. Sadler** is the new Secretary for Minority Church Development. The Homeland Board also announces that **Barbara A. Withers** is the new Book Editor for both Pilgrim Press and United Church Press.

## Looking for a job?

**UCC President needs Assistant for Ecumenical Concerns.** Responsibilities: develop information/supply resources on ecumenical visions and relations for the church; develop networks; staff ecumenical structures; administer UCC ecumenical portfolio. Requires theological/ecumenical background, plus ability to facilitate relationships, communicate, organize, administer. Deadline: July 15. Start: Jan. 2, 1992. Write: **Bernice Powell**, Executive Associate, UCC Office of the President, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115-1100.

**UC Board for Homeland Ministries seeks Executive Vice President** to succeed **Charles Shelby Rooks**. Apply by June 17 to **Sara H. Harting**, Chair, Search Committee, 4105 Chew St., Allentown, PA 18104.

**Central Atlantic Conference seeks Conference Minister;** EEO/AA employer. Inquiries/profiles to **Jeanne Barnett**, 1023 Shipman Lane, McLean, VA 22101.

**Southwest Ohio Association/Ohio Conference seeks ordained UCC Association Minister** for 125 churches - be part of conference ministry team. EOE/AA employer. Send profiles/inquiries by June 30 to **Dennis E. Snell**, 601 W. Riverview Ave., Dayton, OH 45406.

**United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns seeks National Coordinators.** One male and one female, each working approximately 10 hours per week. Must be UCC members, publicly open about their sexual orientation, involved with church and gay, lesbian and bisexual community, and have strong administrative background. For job description, or to send resume and work history including two business and two personal references, write **John Lardin**, Chair, Search Committee, 1515 Ridge Road, Lot 311, Ypsilanti, MI 48198; (313) 487-7187.



ECUMENICAL  
PARTNERSHIP DAY

*This logo celebrates UCC/Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Ecumenical Partnership Sunday, to be observed May 5. The Ecumenical Partnership Committee has called on all levels of both churches to celebrate the day together in word and sacrament. For worship resource materials, write Disciples Council on Christian Unity, P.O. Box 1988, Indianapolis, IN 46206.*

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